

Chapter 24 — Qal–Niphal Contrast Drill

BBH Chapter 24 • Niphal Strong Verbs

For each item: (1) write an English translation of the Niphal form in the Translation column; (2) write the semantic function (Passive / Reflexive / Simple Action) in the Function column. Answer key is on the last page.

Part A — Transitive Roots (Qal acts on an object)

These roots take a direct object in the Qal. The Niphal turns the object into the subject — the classic passive pattern.

#	Root	Qal Meaning	Hiphil Form	Ref	Translation	Function
1	מָכַר	to sell	וַיִּמְכַּר	Gen 37:36		
2	מָצָא	to find	וַיִּמָּצֵא	Gen 44:9		
3	שָׁמַע	to hear	וַיִּשְׁמַע	Gen 45:16		
4	אַסַּף	to gather	וַיִּאַסְפוּ	Gen 49:33		
5	כָּתַת	to cut off	וַיִּכְתְּתָהּ	Exo 12:15		
6	נָתַן	to give	וַיִּתֵּן	Gen 9:2		
7	אָכַל	to eat	וַיֵּאָכַל	Exo 12:46		
8	שָׁמַר	to keep / guard	וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ	Exo 19:12		

Part B — Stative / Intransitive Roots

These roots describe states. Their Niphal expresses the subject coming into or remaining in a state.

#	Root	Qal Meaning	Hiphil Form	Ref	Translation	Function
9	נָצַב	to be stationed	וַיִּנָּצֵב	Gen 37:7		
10	יָתַר	to remain	וַיִּיָּתַר	Gen 44:20		
11	שָׁאַר	to remain	וַיִּשְׁאַר	Exo 14:28		

Part C — Roots with No Standard Qal

These roots occur almost exclusively in the Niphal. The Niphal form is the standard lexical entry.

#	Root	Qal Meaning	Hiphil Form	Ref	Translation	Function
12	לָחַם	no standard Qal	וַיִּלָּחֶם	Exo 17:9		
13	נָחַם	no standard Qal	וַיִּנָּחֶם	Gen 6:6		
14	שָׁבַע	to seven/complete	וַיִּשְׁבַּעַה	Gen 47:31		

Reflection Questions

- For the transitive roots in Part A, describe the pattern in one sentence: what does the Niphal consistently do to the Qal meaning?
- Items 9–11 all involve verbs of position or remaining (■■■■■, ■■■■■, ■■■■■■). How does "reflexive" vs. "middle" vs. "passive" help explain the subtle difference in agency?

3. ■■■■■ (item 12) and ■■■■■ (item 13) are both "lexical Niphal" roots. How does a student recognize this? What should they look for in a dictionary entry?

Answer Key

#	Root	Translation	Function	Explanation
1	מָכַר	he was sold into Egypt	Passive	The object of selling (Joseph) becomes the subject
2	מָצָא	is found (with the cup)	Passive	The thing found becomes the subject; finder absent
3	שָׁמַע	was heard (in Pharaoh's house)	Passive	The report receives the hearing — it becomes audible
4	אָסַף	was gathered to his people	Passive	Jacob receives the action of being gathered in (die)
5	כָּרַת	will be cut off from Israel	Passive	The person receives covenant-exclusion penalty
6	נָתַן	they are given into your hand	Passive	Animals receive the action of being given/placed
7	אָכַל	it shall be eaten	Passive	Passover lamb receives the action of eating
8	שָׁמַר	take heed for yourselves!	Reflexive	Guard yourself — subject directs action back on itself
9	נָצַב	it stood upright	Reflexive	The sheaf stations itself in the standing position
10	יָתַר	he alone was left	Passive/Middle	State of being-left fell upon him; middle nuance
11	שָׁאַר	not one of them remained	Middle	Soldiers were in the state of having been left
12	לָחַם	fight against Amalek!	Simple action	Niphal is the base form; no causative layer
13	נָחַם	the LORD regretted / relented	Simple action	Niphal is the base form; to regret/relent/be comforted
14	שָׁבַע	swear to me!	Reflexive	Bind yourself by oath; reflexive oath-taking